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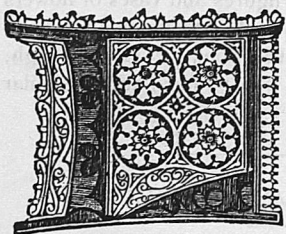
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DECORATION & FURNITURE

THE COLMAN AND TIFFANY WALL-PAPERS.



A TELY reference was made in our columns to the gratifying fact that, for the first time in this country, American artists of established reputation were devoting their talents to the designing of wall-papers. The names

of Messrs. Samuel Colman and Louis C. Tiffany were mentioned in this connection. We are now happy to record the results of their first experiments, for such they modestly call the highly creditable performances in mural decoration which they have effected under the auspices of the manufacturers, Messrs. J. S. Warren & Co. It is not generally known, we believe, that Messrs. Colman and Tiffany and Mrs. T. M. Wheeler are associated as decorators under the business name of Louis C. Tiffany & Co. We mention the matter here, as we are requested by one of the gentlemen to give credit to the *firm* for the work just done. The firm is certainly a notable one, and may be termed a strong representative American team, for who among us has better general ideas in regard to interior decoration than Louis C. Tiffany, or more knowledge of rare fabrics and bric-à-brac than Samuel Colman? And who is so accomplished in art needlework or practical in imparting instruction in it as Mrs. T. M. Wheeler?

Our first illustration shows a wall-paper after designs by Mr. Colman. The maple leaf and fruit, which is the motive of the decoration, is printed in gold on a plum-colored ground. The frieze is continued above the moulding in the same tone until it reaches the graceful curves of color alternating with the golden threads suggestive of the Japanese conventionalized treatment of clouds at sunset. The maple leaves in the field are treated flat, but otherwise are almost a transcript from nature. In the frieze we have the maple leaf again, but representing the tops of trees, which stand out effectively against the sky. The dado of this paper has a plum-colored background of darker tone than the field with the crystals of fish-scales as the motive of decoration.

This same design is repeated for other wall-papers in lighter shades of blue and various other tones.

The frieze by Mr. Colman on the opposite page shows a simple and effective treatment of the honeysuckle slightly conventionalized. The same motive is continued in the field, the color of our model being a background of soft light olive green, with the decoration in buff and rose gray. A dado of the same design as the one shown on this page is used with this field and frieze.

Mr. Colman's ceiling-paper shown in our illustration is a diaper pattern formed by a simple treatment of conventionalized butterfly forms.

The most strikingly original of the papers designed by these gentlemen is certainly the "chain-mail pattern" of Mr. Tiffany. The greatly reduced scale of our illustration does not give a fair idea of the motive, and indeed no illustration in monochrome can convey an adequate impression of the general effect of this quaint conceit. Mr. Tiffany has aimed to represent the effect of a rich Japanese fabric as seen through the interstices of a Japanese coat-of-mail. By means of a peculiar treatment of flat tints, selected, for the most part, for their innocence of contrast and general absence of outline, he has produced quite a unique result. The founda-

motive the clematis vine going to seed, and the seed-vessels are made to combine with spider-webs, which is ingenious, but may be objected to as presenting too decided a pattern, which by repetition becomes tiresome. A paper that we like better has a gilt background with dogwood flowers in soft yellow, with circles of pink and blue coming over the design. Another is a set octagon diaper pattern with flowers falling and meeting behind it. In his ceiling-paper, of which we give an illustration, Mr. Tiffany has achieved a decided success. He has gone directly to nature, and has given us, with the happiest effect, the appearance of the beautiful snow-crystals. Printed in appropriate colors, the same design, with its multitude of objects so disposed as never to show where they begin or end, gives the effect of abnormal height, and is suggestive of "the milky way." The absence of particular design in Mr. Tiffany's ceiling-paper is in strong contrast, our readers will notice, with the set diaper pattern of Mr. Colman's.

In taking leave of these gentlemen, we congratulate them and Messrs. Warren on the success of their endeavors. We cannot but feel that they have taken an important step in the inauguration of an era of improvement and originality in American design, which they have only to follow up to earn for themselves the gratitude of their countrymen to-day and the appreciation of posterity.

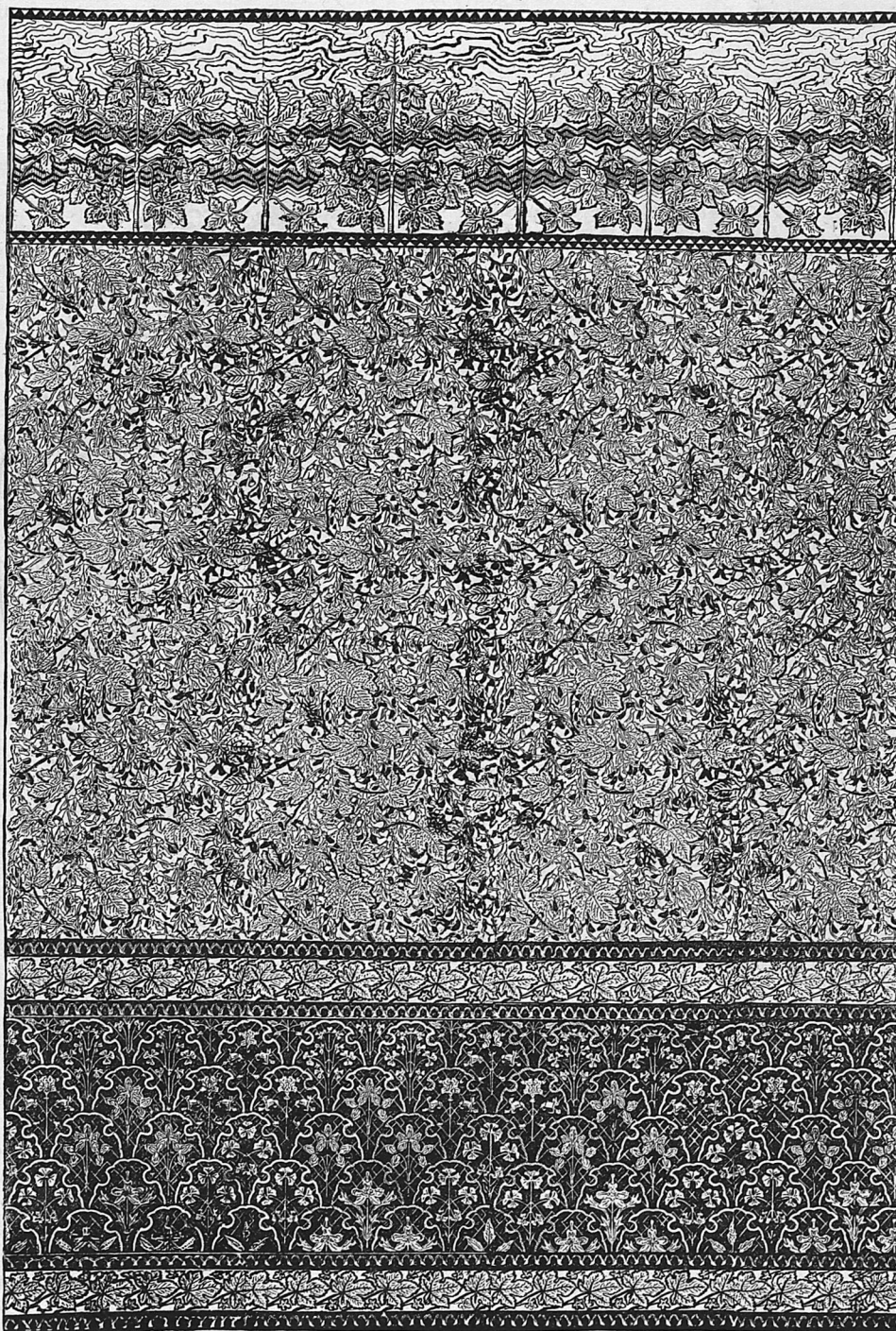
THE ART OF FURNISHING.

I. THE HALL AND THE STAIRCASE.

IN the series of articles of which the present is the first, beginning with the hall and staircase, every part of the house will be separately described as to its appropriate furniture and decoration. No claim for originality is made for these suggestions, which are condensed from H. J. Cooper's "Art of Furnishing." With the exception of slightly modifying some of the suggestions when necessary for their better application to American houses, we shall present them in their original form. We may add that we have somewhat departed from the plan of the book, the first half of which is devoted wholly to the furnishing, and the second wholly to the decoration, of the house. It has seemed to us better to treat the two subjects together

in connection with each part of the house as it is described.

First, in a scheme of furnishing, one would consider the walls. Your house may have been inhabited before, or perhaps it is newly built. In either case the probability is that the walls are already papered or painted, and with equal probability the paper-hangings are unsuitable, or at best only passable. It is a singular thing that the builder should be allowed to take the initiative in decorating a house, without the slightest reference to the wishes of those who may occupy and furnish it. It might be better if he would content himself with putting on a first coat of paint only.



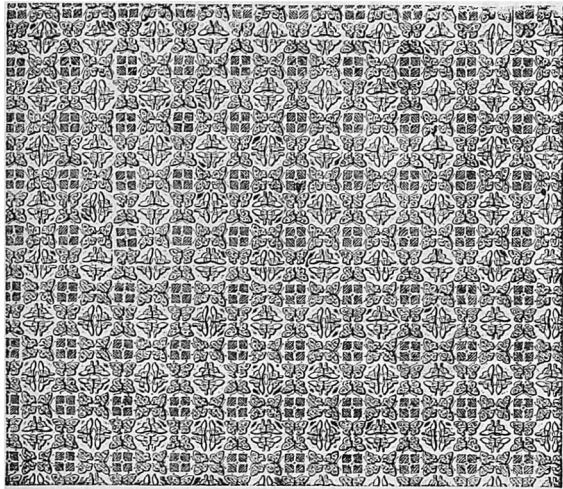
WALL-PAPER DESIGNED BY MR. SAMUEL COLMAN.

tion is of yellow and red bronze golds printed on a yellow ground, or silver bronze printed on a gray ground, with small peonies in delicate contrasting colors for the design. Over all this is printed the final block of the chain mail. The total effect is a gentle iridescence almost as soft as that in the folds of a fine shot silk. The frieze is made somewhat lighter than the field by a slight modification of the design, and the dado is made darker by showing more of the mail and less of the fabric. The idea of this paper was suggested by Mr. Tiffany's seeing a suit of old Japanese armor in Mr. Colman's studio.

Another wall-paper of Mr. Tiffany's has for its

Now, as the walls constitute a background—an atmosphere, so to speak, of tone or color, from which the occupants are never free, and which must exercise, not a mere sentimental, but a positive influence upon their nervous organism, we would say: By all means have your normal surroundings as much as possible in harmony with your individual taste, and with the special requirements of the several apartments.

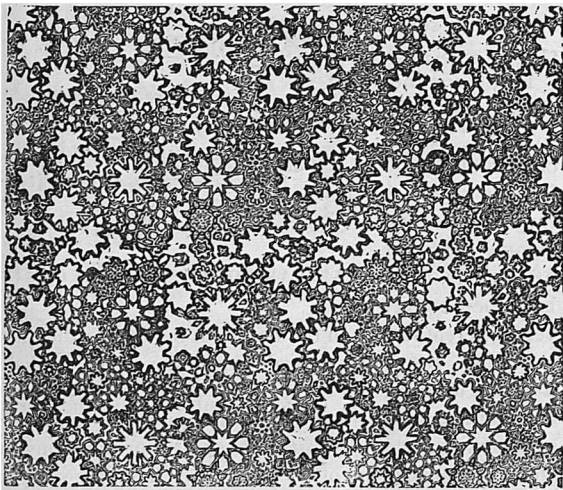
The hall or vestibule, as the first division of a house that meets the eye on entering, should either be of a quiet and undemonstrative nature, or else it should give the key-note to the entire house. In any case the furniture as well as the decoration should be in a lower key than the rest of the house, never richer. Unless your hall chance to be large, let the furniture be as condensed as possible, and have as little of it as needful for



CEILING-PAPER DESIGNED BY MR. SAMUEL COLMAN.

the exigencies of an entrance-room or passage. A small side-table, a chair or two, an umbrella-stand, some appliance for hats and coats, are the necessary requisites of a hall. The hat and umbrella-stand may be combined, or that eminently practical invention, a rail and pegs fixed to the wall, may be substituted for the usually unsteady and inelegant hat-stand; while a brass or bronzed rail fixed to the wall, with a painted zinc pan on the floor, will do duty for the umbrella-stand.

Cast-iron hat-stands and hall-tables, with plate-glass mirrors, and marble tops, are to be avoided: there is a chilly, skeleton, machine look about them, which strikes horror into one at the first glance. You can never make an artistic room with iron furniture; and, more-



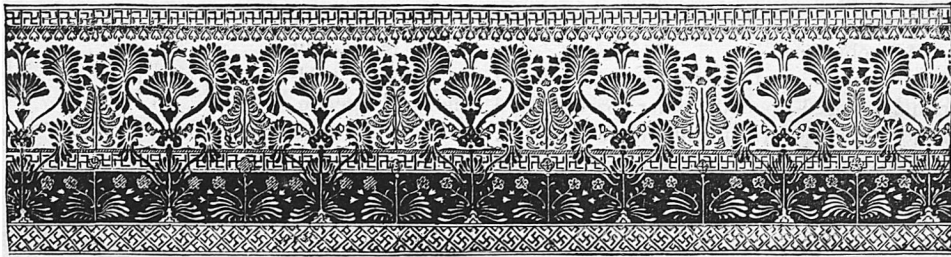
CEILING-PAPER DESIGNED BY MR. L. C. TIFFANY.

over, although the term "iron" is almost a synonym for strength, the iron hall furniture offered for sale is none of the strongest, and when once broken in any part cannot be made good except in the clumsiest way. The ordinary pattern hat-stand, however, looking like a series of outspread arms on an attenuated frame, is quite as bad in its way, being less steady and almost as ugly. There are some good hat-stands now made, having at each end a quarter-circle rail for umbrellas, and a table between. The only thing is, the table or the umbrellas are generally in the way of the coats, and this seems the great difficulty to overcome in attempting to combine the objects of a hat-stand, hall-table, and umbrella-stand in one.

The choice of color will depend upon the treatment of the walls. Light or dark oak, or walnut, are useful

woods, or stained black (ebonized) furniture, if the decoration admits of it. The writer has seen a hall-table, hat-rail, and bench of pine painted a plain color—say olive-green or chocolate, suitable to the surrounding coloring—which is inexpensive and unobjectionable, though not of course so durable as a harder wood.

If you have an outer and inner hall, so much the



WALL-PAPER FRIEZE DESIGNED BY MR. SAMUEL COLMAN.

better. It keeps the inner hall more private and less draughty. The two are usually divided by glass doors, which give a good opportunity for introducing stained glass instead of the ordinary ground-glass. The best plan is to glaze the upper portion of the doors with transparent sheet or plate glass, and temporarily fix the stained glass (which should be in a separate frame) against the lower part of the glazed panels, sufficiently high to intercept the view from the outer hall.

The pattern stained should not entirely cover the glass, nor be too heavily colored, or it will darken the light. If there are no doors, and your hall is long enough, it may be divided off by curtains suspended by a rod from the ceiling; or, better still, a sheet of glass (two feet to three feet deep) may be framed in between the walls and ceiling, and the curtains suspended from beneath the glass. This will allow of light being thrown into the inner hall.

There can be little doubt that for the floor of a hall nothing surpasses the encaustic tiles now so popular. They are easily kept clean, are cool, and afford an occasional relief from the hot carpeted rooms, and they are everlasting. The expense incurred in putting down a tiled floor is, however, a rather heavy item; and as the tiles cannot be removed without replacing the original floor, it is not worth doing unless we are sure of remaining in the house for a number of years. Next to a tiled floor the old-fashioned oil-cloth is to be preferred, even to the more recent inventions of linoleum, and various compounds of cork and india-rubber. None of the latter have the smooth brilliant surface of oil-cloth, although they possess a greater softness and elasticity.

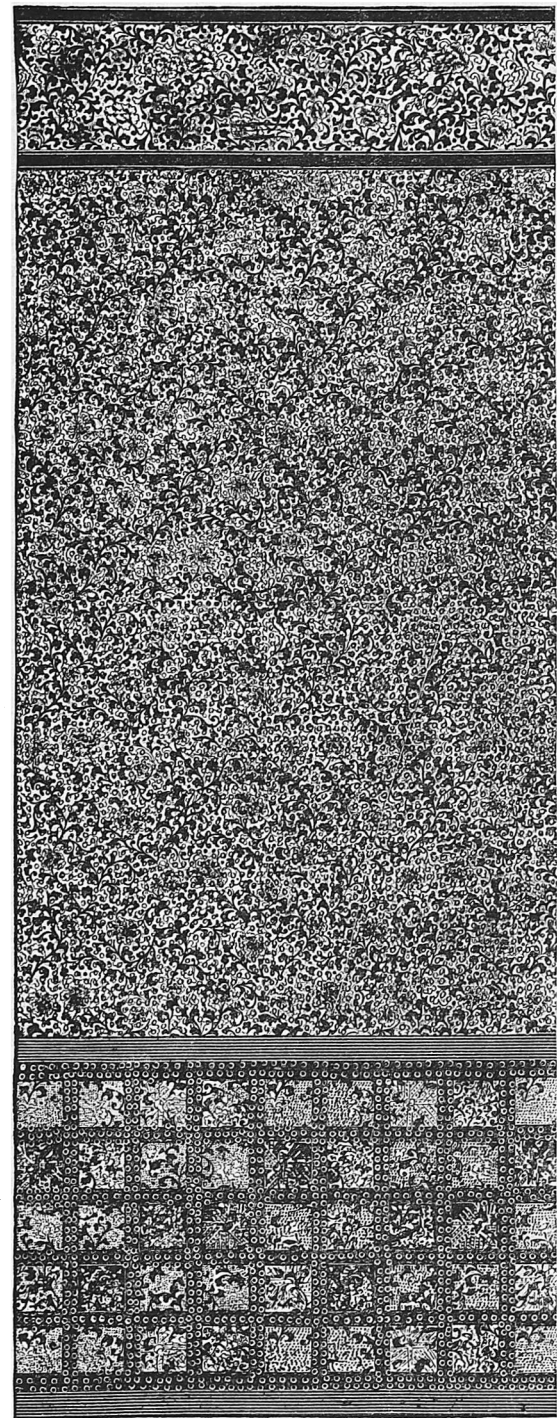
There is room yet, in spite of the variety of patterns in floor-cloths, for some improvement. The favorite tile patterns are frequently very happy combinations of color, and have a pleasing effect. The imitation will, however, grow wearisome soon, and what are wanted are designs peculiar to floor-cloth itself, and not a pretentious imitation of something costlier.

Too many colors should be avoided, as also too small and scattered a pattern. Greater breadth of effect is obtained by a moderate uniformity of color, such as chocolate and buff, Indian red and buff. The once much-used black and white marble floor-cloths are too gray and gloomy to suit the advanced love of color among us, however they might have satisfied a previous generation. Matting, if coarse, holds the dust, and if fine will scarcely stand the rough wear of an entrance-hall.

One sees Brussels carpet used not infrequently, but it is unsuitable, considering the inevitable dust and traffic to which it is subject. It may be very charming to have a noiseless floor-covering over the hall, on which no footsteps reverberate, but a hard cool floor in this part of the house is probably better.

A word concerning the stairs, which, from their peculiar elevation, are unavoidably noticeable, sometimes distressingly so, when they happen to face the entrance doorway. These form an integral part of the hall, and in many old houses the broad staircase, with its massive hand-rail and balustrades, is a remarkably handsome feature. Nowadays, when space is costly, the staircase has to be cramped into the closest possible compass, so that it behooves us to do our best to mitigate the effects of this economy on the part of the builder. Nothing detracts more from the appearance of a hall and staircase than a narrow, mean stair-carpeting. Aim at a broad effect in the stairway. Axminster,

Brussels, or self-colored felts are the best for the purpose, and should cover the stair with the exception of a narrow margin on each side, which may be painted cream-white or stone color, or darker shades if preferred, or the wall decoration seems to require it. The stair-carpet should, of course, be carefully chosen to harmonize with the given scheme of the staircase and hall.



WALL-PAPER DESIGNED BY MR. LOUIS C. TIFFANY.

varying from three to five feet, and the upper part colored, in distemper, a lighter tint than the lower part (or dado). A dividing line, darker still, should be struck between the two portions, and the wood-work (doors, skirtings, etc.) should be painted in dark corresponding tones. But if it is desired to paper the hall and staircase, there are now papers to be had of

special design for the purpose, which may be either varnished or not, or the lower part only varnished.

As to the colors most suitable, that will depend in a measure on the amount of light obtainable. The staircase is a passage, not a dwelling-room, and admits of lighter treatment, inasmuch as we have not to consider the effect of the walls as a background to persons or things. We incline to an effect of coolness and airiness, combined with a pleasant softness of tone. If patterned, the pattern should have a softly-stencilled effect, and not be obtrusive.

On the other hand, since the staircase is not subject to the restraints imposed upon the other apartments, a bolder and more vigorous treatment may be adopted. The architectural features, for instance, may offer facilities for effective decoration, and your hall and staircase may present charming glimpses of classic or mediæval periods; or we may find ourselves surrounded with imagery of tropical luxuriance, while the forms and fragrance of real plants will complete the delusion. Only, the apartments must be sumptuous in proportion, or our expectations will be raised, to be disappointed further on. In a general way, however, the staircase will claim only a moderate share of attention.

Creamy yellow or buff, pale fawn, pale salmon, or light tones of Indian red, pale sage-greens, turquoise blue, are among the tints to be recommended. Grays are apt to have a gloomy effect, unless relieved by pictures or prints. For yellow or buff walls, the dado and wood-work may be chocolate or olive-brown, or a dark-blue toned down with black. For pale salmon, dark bronze-green. For pale sage-green, either darker tints of the same, or dull green-blue, olive-browns, or Indian red. With turquoise-blue, chocolate will contrast best, or maroon.

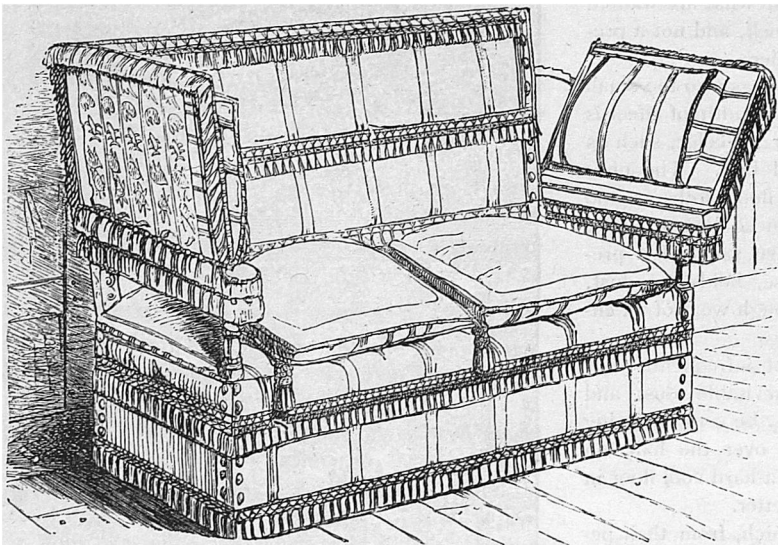
Take care not to let your entrance (or hall) overpower the rooms which are entered from it, but let it be subordinate, and leading up to the colors of the reception-rooms.

From the hall we pass to the dining-room, which will be treated in another number of THE ART AMATEUR.

EASTLAKE AND HIS IDEAS.*

II.

WE add to the illustrations of dining-room furniture given last month a sofa of the same set as those good old-fashioned English seventeenth century chairs



ENGLISH SOFA OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

at Knole House, which Mr. Eastlake so highly commends. The settee is of the same order; it stands in

the billiard-room at that noble country-seat. The drawing-room chairs of our illustrations are from Mr. Eastlake's own designs. They are constructed of oak, covered with velvet, and trimmed with silk fringe. It will be seen that the author of "Hints on Household Taste" has no sympathy with the tradition that the furniture of the drawing-room must necessarily be flimsy and fragile—or "light and elegant" as the dealers used to call those chairs which "look as if they

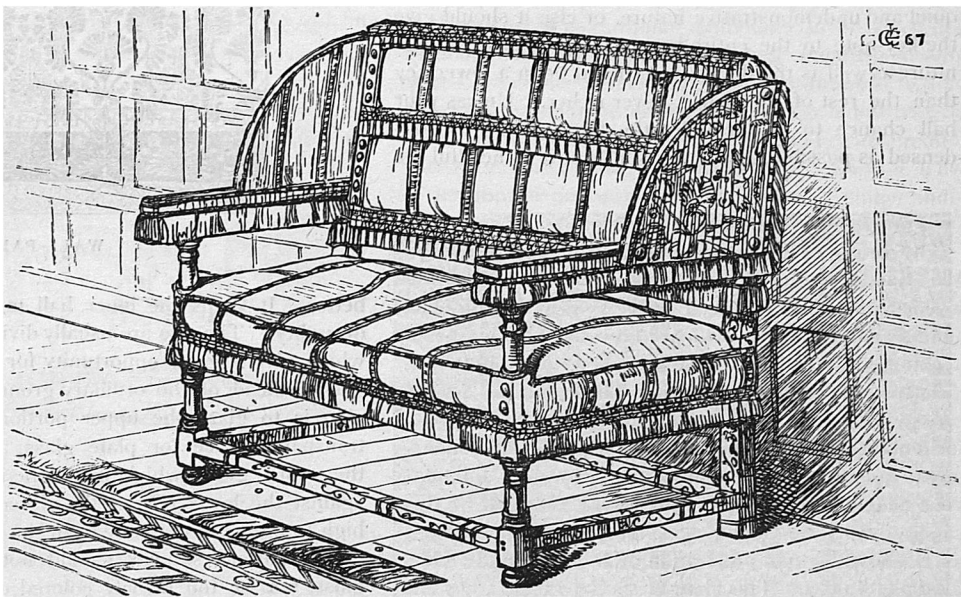
must sink beneath the weight of the first middle-aged gentleman who used them." "Lightness and elegance," we are told, "are agreeable qualities in their way, and, under certain conditions of design, art should be aimed at. For instance, the treatment of mere surface ornament, such as painted arabesques, etc., or of details purely decorative and useless, as the filagree gold of a lady's earring,

may well be of this character; but objects intended for real and daily service, such as a table which has to bear the weight of heavy books or dishes, or a sofa on which we may recline at length, ought not to look light and elegant, but strong and comely, for comeliness, whether in nature or art, is by no means incompatible with strength. The Roman gladiator had a grace of his own, but it was not the grace of Antinous. Our modern furniture is essentially effeminate in form. How often do we see in fashionable drawing-rooms a type of couch which seems to be composed of nothing but cushions? It is really supported by a framework of wood or iron, but this internal structure is carefully concealed by the stuffing and material with which the whole is covered. . . . If elegance has anything in common with real beauty—beauty which can be estimated by a fixed and lasting standard—then I venture to submit that this eccentric combination of bad carpentry and bloated pillows is very inelegant, and, in fact, a piece of ugliness which we ought not to tolerate in our houses."

In the matter of tables, the system of "balancing by means of pins and screws a circular framework of wood on a hollow boxed-up cylinder" is strongly condemned, as "manifestly wrong in principle, for, in nine cases out of ten, tables made on this plan become unsteady and out of order after a few years' wear. To obviate this evil the central leg or stem should be made *solid*, with a base heavy and substantial enough to keep the table steady by its mere weight. Four struts should then be introduced, stretching diagonally from the side of the stem to 'ledges,' screwed on the under-surface of the circular top, which may be a simple disk of wood, about an inch in thickness; by this means the unsightly and expensive mode of *framing* the table-top round its outer edge is rendered unnecessary, and that inconvenient tripod, which is always in the way of one's feet, may be avoided,

while the whole table can be taken to pieces, when occasion requires, just as readily as those in ordinary use." Mr. Eastlake strongly disapproves of the conventional large showy mirror over the drawing-room mantel-piece, with its wooden frame plastered over with composition to imitate carving of a most extravagant kind, and then gilded, as in the worst taste. He says: "If real carved work cannot be afforded, it is far better to let such mirrors be fitted in plain solid frames of wood, say

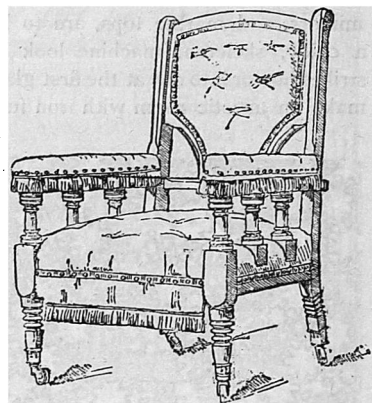
three or four inches in width, enriched with delicate mouldings or incised ornament. If executed in oak, they may be left of their natural color; if in the commoner kinds of wood, they can be ebonized (i.e., stained black), and further decorated with narrow gold stripes running transversely over the mouldings." The general use of the highly ornamented gilt picture-frame with its brittle plaster-work is also condemned. Mr. Eastlake admits that gilding on a picture-frame is not



ENGLISH SETTEE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

only justifiable by way of ornament, but is much to be recommended as a foil or neutral ground for enhancing the value of color; but he urges that it ought to be laid directly on the wood, without any intervening composition, and if any ornament in relief is attempted, it should be in the solid material. He strongly advocates the use of pictures for decorating the walls of the drawing-room. He thinks that they should be in one row only, and that opposite the eye, excepting, of course, full-length portraits of life size and other large works, which should be hung higher. It is not desirable, however, that the drawings or paintings thus arranged should come into close contact, and he suggests that they should be separated by such small objects as sconces, small ornamental mirrors, or little wooden brackets, supporting statuettes, vases, etc.

People continually associate the words "luxurious" and "comfortable" as if they were synonymous. To the mind of Mr. Eastlake they convey very different ideas. In the bedroom he detests the glaring chintz, the elaborate wall-paper, the French polish, and rich draperies on every side. These, he says truly, may represent considerable expense and a certain order of luxury, but not comfort. He points out that some of the worst specimens of decorative art that one sees exposed for sale are expensive articles of luxury, and that some of the most appropriately formed, and therefore most artistic, objects of household use are to be bought for a trifling sum. Among the latter he classes the old-fashioned common bedroom wash-stand, which, notwithstanding the ridiculous fashion in which it was painted in imitation of oak or bird's-eye maple, was a serviceable article. The shape could hardly be improved. The wash-stand "is fitted with two shelves, the upper one cut to receive the basin, and the lower one 'boxed' to receive a drawer. It has a splash-board to protect the wall against which it is placed. It is supported on four legs turned and shaped after a fashion infinitely superior to that of any modern dining-table. It is not, indeed, an example of high art in manufacture, but it is an instance of honest workmanship." Mr. Eastlake's design for a wash-stand which we reproduce is of very simple construction, the only



EASTLAKE DRAWING-ROOM CHAIR.

* In resuming this subject, the writer desires to correct an error into which he has fallen, in common with many others, in assuming that Charles L. Eastlake and Sir Charles L. Eastlake were one and the same person. The author of the "Hints on Household Taste" is the former, who is now living and is a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects; the latter, his kinsman, was the Royal Academician, who died in 1865, and whose portrait was published in THE ART AMATEUR last month.